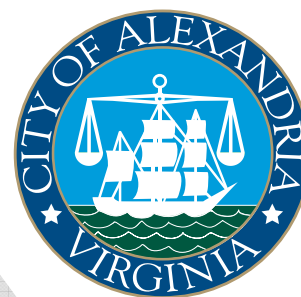


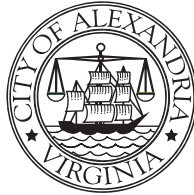
# **Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force Recommendations**

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**FIRST DRAFT  
December 22, 2008**

# Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force



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The Task Force also wishes to acknowledge the efforts of Old Town Civic Association resident Sarita Schotta and Chamber of Commerce representative Denielle Vendetti who each served on the Task Force in limited capacity.

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# Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force



## Recommendations

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**COVER LETTER**  
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## **I. BACKGROUND**

Tourism is vital to Alexandria's local economy, growth and development. As a result, motorcoaches and tour buses perform functions that benefit the City and residents. However, motorcoach operations at times conflict with our residential neighborhoods and the City's important historic fabric. This report outlines the recommendations of the City's Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force which was established by the City Manager in April 2008 to develop a proactive approach to motorcoach management and present its findings to City Council.

In this report, the term "motorcoach" means any nonscheduled bus and thus does not apply to school buses or public transit vehicles. The Task Force defined a motorcoach or tour bus to mean large motor vehicles that convey passengers – most typically over longer distances between cities where passengers pre-book tickets for specific trips. A motorcoach often seats as many as 56 passengers and provides luggage holds separate from passenger cabins, as well as equipment to accommodate persons with mobility impairments.

The issue of motorcoaches has grown in importance over the last few years as the City has sought new revenue sources, especially from increased tourism. In the cover page summary of its 2007 report "Motorcoaches and Tourism Policy in Alexandria, Virginia" the Alexandria Old & Historic Residents Group state: "A relatively recent and rapidly growing component of this tourism in Old Town is motorcoach traffic. The unregulated growth of this traffic has had many deleterious effects on the Old Town area. Alexandria, like other significant historic residential areas, must regulate this motorcoach traffic. The regulation should be done in conjunction with the development of a tourism policy that is protective of residential interests, is conducive to business interests, and results in a high quality of experience for tourists."

The residents and City of Alexandria have previously explored various issues involving motorcoach and tour bus operations. In February 2004, the City Council charged the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA) with the establishment of a Motorcoach Task Force. The goal of the ACVA Task Force was to develop suggestions to enhance the economic benefit of motorcoach tours, while minimizing negative impacts on business and residential communities. The ACVA Task Force presented a plan to the City Manager on May 26, 2005, which recommended a work session with City Council and final report in November 2005.

The ACVA Task Force reached agreement on many issues including the inadequacy of existing short-term and overnight parking, insufficient signage, and the need for enforcement with respect to idling. Additionally, the group made important progress by establishing new overnight parking at the Masonic Temple, revising existing brochures and maps, and opening new lines of communication with motorcoach and tour bus companies. However, the ACVA Task Force did not reach agreement on the issue of designated routes, registration, or proposed limits on certain types of motorcoach trips.

By early 2008 – as part of the Chamber of Commerce National Harbor Collaborative Work Group – it became clear that additional management strategies were needed to address continual motorcoach issues related to expected growth due to tourism.

### Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force

To help the City address issues related to motorcoach transportation, the City Manager appointed an Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force in April 2008. This group was comprised of five residents, five business/industry representatives, one representative from Historic Alexandria and five staff/City Council members, including representatives from Transportation & Environmental Services and Police.

As a collaborative effort the Task Force's goal was to develop a proactive approach to motorcoach management, which recognizes the economic value of the industry and balances the operational needs with measures to limit intrusive effects on Alexandria's neighborhoods, the environment, quality of life, traffic and parking. The Task Force reviewed best practices and sought to build consensus on measures that balance the multiple interests of the City.

The 15-member Task Force met on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month beginning in May 2008 to address citizen and industry concerns, review best practices, and discuss options to build a consensus among the group. The Task Force quickly agreed in principle on a Charter and moved into a study and analysis phase. As a result – given the City's deadline for preparation of a legislative package – the Task Force considered whether it should immediately seek regulatory authority from the state to manage motorcoach operations. However, after discussions with the City Attorney's office and Legislative Director the group decided against this option due to the many unanswered questions about the City's existing efforts.

At its initial meetings, the Task Force determined its approach should use the following general structure:

- Compare motorcoach operations in Alexandria with other cities to review opportunities and constraints
- Seek input from industry representatives and local business to ensure a balanced set of interests are addressed
- Develop primary issues and use a solutions-based approach to make short-term and long-term recommendations for motorcoach management

This report is organized to reflect an approach that focuses on three central chapters:

- II. Motorcoach Operations in Alexandria and Other Cities
- III. Motorcoach Transportation
- IV. Primary Issues & Recommendations

Chapter V is a chart of detailed recommendations that provides an overall framework for the City's proposed motorcoach management strategies.

Early in its study, the Task Force identified five primary "Key Issue" areas which included: (a) Designated routes; (b) Short- and Long-term Parking; (c) Enforcement; (d) Loading/Unloading and (d) Communication/Education. The Task Force outlined a framework for motorcoach management, which included a plan to establish an advisory committee, pursue voluntary registration/permitting, establish limits on certain types of motorcoach trips, and seek authority from the state to regulate motorcoach traffic. The Task Force also focused to incorporate input and planning principles from

other City initiatives such as Eco-City Alexandria, the Wayfinding Task Force, National Harbor Collaborative, and the newly approved Transportation Master Plan.

### Community Outreach

The Motorcoach Task Force incorporated community input into its regular meetings throughout the overall process. At the beginning of each Task Force meeting members were reminded they represented constituencies and were asked to incorporate regular input from the community during a period at the beginning of each meeting. Additionally, a period at the end of each meeting was also set aside for public comment and questions.

Members of the Motorcoach Task Force made periodic updates to community groups: including the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce Governmental Affairs Subcommittee, Old Town Civic Association (OTCA), and provided two updates to City Council, on September 23, 2008 and on November 25, 2008. Additionally, the OTCA held a meeting and panel discussion on motorcoaches for its members on October 8, 2008. Three of the five panelists served on the Task Force and provided updates regarding progress. The Task Force made a second presentation and update to the OTCA on January 14, 2008. A final community meeting was held on January 26, 2009 to incorporate comments from citizens.

At the beginning of its efforts, the Motorcoach Task Force established a web page ([www.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach](http://www.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach)) and established an eNews group that provided regular updates about upcoming meetings. Task Force meeting notes, minutes, presentations and reports were posted by staff to the City website after each meeting. Numerous comments were received from residents at various meetings, which contributed to formulating the recommendations.

### Motorcoach Task Force Recommendations

The Motorcoach Task Force believes it has a consensus on a balanced program of motorcoach management, which blends operational measures, enforcement, and the education needed to adequately inform motorcoach tour bus companies and the residents of Alexandria. Ultimately, the program recommends supporting regulation which will be made possible through amendments to the Code of Virginia. The Task Force believes that an incremental approach to motorcoach management is a practical and cost-effective solution to issues related to motorcoach traffic, without having to resort to radical changes that may inadvertently harm tourism.

An overview of the recommendations categorized by “Key Issue” areas is included below:

#### **General Motorcoach Management Recommendations**

1. Appoint an advisory committee to oversee the future management of motorcoach operations within the City.
2. Institute a voluntary, on-line motorcoach registration system by March 2010 to include fees and daily limitations on certain types of motorcoach trips. In the interim, conduct counts of motorcoach traffic in Alexandria.

#### **Designated Routes**

3. Designate the unit block of King Street one-way westbound permanently to allow for safer traffic flow and provide better motorcoach management.

4. By March 2010, establish designated routes for four primary trip types: (1) Motorcoaches bound for hotels, (2) Motorcoaches bound for loading/unloading/short-term parking east of Washington Street, (3) Sightseeing buses with step-on guides and (4) Pass-through motorcoaches. Routes will be vetted and approved through the proposed advisory committee.

#### **Unloading/Loading and Short-Term Parking**

5. Designate the south side of Jamieson Avenue between Holland Lane and South West Street as short-term motorcoach parking with limited hours and seasonality.
6. Improve signage at existing designated loading/unloading and parking areas.
7. Designate new 15-minute loading/unloading spaces in the 100 blocks of North and South Washington Street from March through June to accommodate seasonal increases in motorcoach traffic.

#### **Enforcement**

8. Instruct the Alexandria Police Department to more aggressively enforce existing city ordinances with respect to motorcoach traffic and collect/report data related to motorcoach violations.
9. Within 3 years, include in the City's legislative package a joint City-industry proposal to amend the Code of Virginia to acquire regulatory authority to restrict operation of non-scheduled buses to specific streets and/or issue permits.
10. Continue funding the Alexandria Police Department in its motorcoach management efforts in the Unit Block of King Street.

#### **Education**

11. Use a combination of electronic, print, and broadcast tools to improve communications efforts related to motorcoach traffic.
12. Publish a new brochure and motorcoach map in 2009.

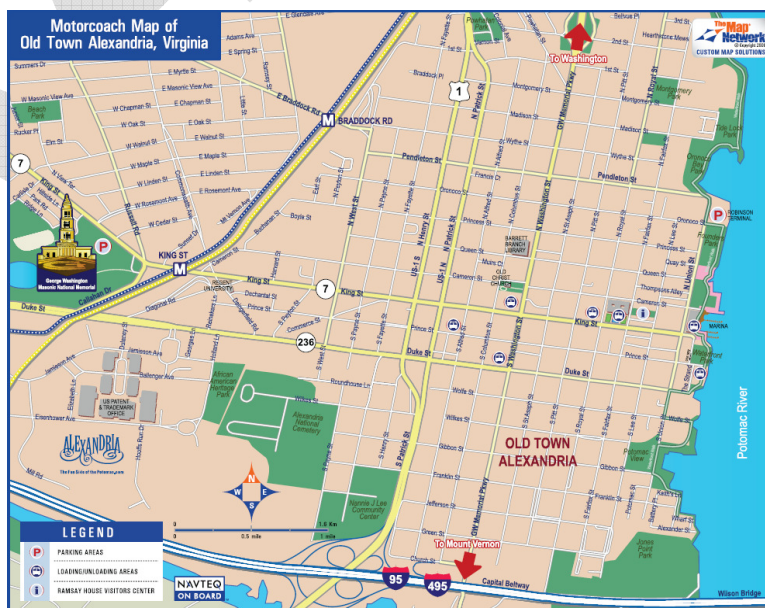
## II. Motorcoach Operations in Alexandria and Other Cities

This chapter includes a review of current motorcoach management strategies in Alexandria and nearly a dozen selected localities across the United States. City staff undertook this analysis early in the Task Force process in order to assess opportunities and constraints among other cities that share Alexandria's need to accommodate motorcoaches and large tour buses. Much of this information is easily obtained on-line, but in some cases staff conducted follow-up interviews to clarify or refine the publicly available charts, maps and descriptions. In two cases – Williamsburg, VA and Charleston, SC – staff arranged for the Task Force to hear presentations from representatives of these cities to learn more about their approach to motorcoach management. Meeting conversations are cited in specific detail in the Appendix of this report, which also includes Task Force meeting minutes.

It is important to note that while each city's experience with motorcoach management provides Alexandria with learning opportunities, this review was not conducted with the intent to cut-and-paste management strategies to fit Alexandria. The dense, mixed-use and historic character of Old Town, coupled with the lack of access to large parking locations and no central drop-off area required the Task Force to be selective in its review and subsequent approach to motorcoach management.

### Motorcoach Management in Alexandria through 2008

The rules and regulations for motorcoach operations in Alexandria are grounded in City and State regulatory code, as well as several years of proactive efforts by the ACVA to effectively communicate with Alexandria businesses, tour and travel companies, industry associations, and City departments. The City continues to protect and preserve the historic core of its residential neighborhoods while maintaining tour bus access to local businesses, destinations and hotels. Alexandria currently provides motorcoach unloading and loading in six locations in Old Town, one short-term parking location in Old Town, and one long-term (overnight) parking location at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. Currently there are no designated routes into or out of the City, and permit fees are only required for parking at the Masonic Memorial.



ACVA Motorcoach Map.

## Unloading & Loading

Motorcoach loading and unloading in Old Town is typically available for more than 10 buses at a time in six locations on or east of Washington Street:



Unloading spot at The Lyceum (200 block of S Washington Street). City of Alexandria.

1. **The Waterfront and Torpedo Factory Arts Center:** One space on the north side of the unit block of King Street for westbound buses, behind the King Street Trolley.
2. **Market Square, Visitors Center and Walking Tours:** Approximately five spaces (270 feet) On the north side of the 300 block of King Street for westbound buses (between Fairfax and Royal Streets)
3. **Gadsby's Museum and Gadsby's Tavern Restaurant:** One space (60 feet) 134-138 North Royal Street, which is on the west side of the street and for southbound buses
4. **Christ Church:** Two spaces (90 feet) on the west side of the 100 block of North Washington Street

for southbound buses except for between 4 and 6 pm on weekdays

5. **The Lyceum:** One space (75 feet) on the west side of the 200 block of South Washington Street for southbound buses except for between 4 and 6 pm on weekdays
6. **The Strand:** Space for multiple bus loading and unloading is allowed, although buses may not block the Old Dominion Boat Club Parking Entrance

Loading and unloading in non-designated areas is prohibited by Sec. 9-12-162 of the City of Alexandria Code and punishable by a \$100 fine. Additionally, City and State code prohibit tour bus idling for more than 10 minutes in commercial and residential areas.

## Motorcoach Parking

Motorcoach parking is accommodated in two locations. Free, two-hour, unreserved **short-term** motorcoach parking exists for four to five buses (250 feet) on the east side of the 500 block of North Union Street beside Robinson Terminal.

All motorcoaches staying for a period of 24 hours or more are required to use **long-term** parking at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. Overnight permits are \$35. The Masonic Memorial also allows temporary (**short-term**) parking between 9:00 am and 11:00 pm for \$10 per temporary motorcoach permit parking pass per day. All permits must be obtained in advance from the Alexandria Visitors Center at Ramsay House or may be obtained on-line at [www.visitalexandriava.gov](http://www.visitalexandriava.gov).

In May 2008, the ACVA began donating all proceeds from sales of overnight motorcoach parking permits to the American Bus Association Foundation scholarship fund, which provides financial assistance to students working towards a degree in travel and tourism.



**Short-term motorcoach parking on N Union Street, occupied by tractor trailer. City of Alexandria.**

## Information Availability & ACVA Outreach

The City's primary information mechanism is a brochure, "Motorcoach Rules & Regulations for Historic Alexandria, Virginia," produced by the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association and available on-line at the ACVA website [www.visitalexandriava.com](http://www.visitalexandriava.com). The ACVA also produces copies of the brochure which is stocked in weatherproof canisters at each unloading and parking area.

Since at least 2004, the ACVA has worked to communicate Alexandria's motorcoach rules and regulations to the industry by working collaboratively with local businesses, tour and travel companies, industry associations and City departments. In 2007-08, ACVA contacted the major Alexandria businesses focusing on the tour market via phone and/or personal visits. The businesses contacted include: Alexandria Colonial Tours, Fish Market, Il Porto, Dandy Dinner Cruises, Footsteps to the Past, Buggy's, Dandy Restaurant Cruises, Potomac Riverboat Company, and the Food Court. The ACVA addressed rules/regulations and the permitting process. As a result, a reciprocal link to the ACVA website was requested on individual business websites, and a Motorcoach Usage Calendar for Market Square and the Waterfront was created for participating businesses. Additionally, the motorcoach brochure was provided in electronic format to forward to group clients.

The ACVA notifies and updates hotels, attraction owners, and members of the public via e-mail and personal meetings on a semi-annual schedule, to educate and inform hotel staff on rules and regulations regarding the permitting processes. ACVA also encourages businesses to link to the ACVA motorcoach website and has opened negotiations with the tour coordinator of Mount Vernon to determine the feasibility of reaching motorcoaches touring this estate. ACVA has also revamped its website each year since 2006 with program updates.

The ACVA has also completed the following general activities:

- Contacted major tour operators and guide services including World Strides, New Century Tours, New World Tours, Educational Tours and American Christian Tours to determine frequency of tours visiting Alexandria
- Contacted and distributed “Motorcoach Rules and Regulations for Historic Alexandria” to the National Tour Association, United Motorcoach Association, Pennsylvania Bus Association, American Bus Association, Greater New Jersey Bus Association
- Joined the Professional Tour Guild of Washington, DC and generated an informational kit which includes a letter/brochure/map
- ACVA’s quarterly “Tour and Travel” e-mail includes updates on rules and regulations
- Distributed materials at national touring conventions

#### Motorcoach Management in Other Cities

For each city reviewed, the write-ups here include brief overviews as well as plans and specific measures for motorcoach management. If possible, distinctive features about each city are noted with particular attention paid to features that may be relevant to Alexandria. The following localities were reviewed:

- Aiken, SC
- Arlington County, VA
- Atlantic City, NJ
- Baltimore, MD
- Boston, MA
- Charleston, SC
- Kennebunkport, ME
- New Orleans, LA
- Philadelphia, PA
- Savannah, GA
- Washington, DC
- Williamsburg, VA

A chart that briefly encapsulates motorcoach management strategies in selected cities is included below. Please refer to the write-ups for more specific information.

## Summary of Motorcoach Management Strategies in Other Localities

	Desig. Curb Loading Areas	Desig. Curb Parking Areas	Periph. Long- Term Surface Parking Lots	Central Off- Street Bus Parking Facilities	Prohibit Parking At Transit Stops, Meters, Loading Zones	Allow Parking At Transit Bus Stops, Meters, Loading Zones	Idling Limits	Daily Permit Required For Tour Bus Operation	Prohib. of Operation on Desig. Roads	Desig. of Recmd/Req Routes	Reqd. Transfer to Circul/ Walking	Restrictions on Volume of Tour Bus Operations	Coord. Fee At Parking Facilit.	Reserv/ Regist System	Help Line
Aiken	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Arlington	2 locations	4 locations		Under study	X	In hardship situations	X								
Atlantic City		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Baltimore	X		3 locations (\$15-\$45)		X						Proposed		X		
Boston	8 locations, 15-min. limit	1 location, 3 hour limit	2 locations	Surface lot close to historic district	X		5 min			X					
Charleston	6 locations	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kennebunkport	1 location, 10-min. limit		Perm facility location TBD		X		10 min	X	X	X		X		X	
New Orleans	X				X		10 min		X	X				X (tour guide req'd)	
Philadelphia	9 locations, 10-min limit			New bus parking facility, open 9 am to 11 pm	X		10 min				Yes- for some sites		\$20/day, addtl. \$10 for overnight	X	X
Savannah	X		X		X		None in Hist. Dist; 10-15 min otherwise	X	X	Indiv. Route plan req'd	X	X	\$10-\$30		
Washington, DC	X	X			X		3 minutes	X	X	X				X	X
Williamsburg	X		X	X			15 min (not required)		X				X	X	

## **Aiken, SC**

In response to residents' desire to curb the number of tour buses entering Aiken's three historic districts and horse district, the City implemented a tourism ordinance that restricts motorcoach access to these areas. The tourism ordinance prohibits all motorcoaches over 40 feet in length from touring the City, and requires smaller buses to obtain a license for touring. Motorcoaches and tour buses are still permitted to discharge passengers, but they must contact the City in advance so the loading/unloading zones and long-term parking spaces can be designated and reserved. The City has implemented an idling restriction of no more than 15 minutes while buses unload/load passengers and tour buses are not allowed to stop in front of residences, businesses, or other locations. Aiken has also established certain time periods which tours can take place and limit the volume of tours within the historic areas.

According to reports from Aiken City staff, the strict guidelines have resulted in a decrease in the number of motorcoaches traveling to the City. In addition, the licensing requirement has deterred companies from operating and providing services for small bus vehicles. According to one city official, the number of tour buses bringing visitors to the City has decreased from approximately 8-10 per year to (2) per year. When visitors arrive in Aiken and seek tours of the historic districts, the only option is to rent a City owned and operated trolley. The number of tours provided by the trolley is limited and a fee of \$12 per rider is charged in addition to an overall rental fee of \$75. Tour guides licensed by the City are provided when tours using the trolley commences.

According to City staff, the result of Aiken's tourism ordinance has been a steep decrease in the number of motorcoaches, tour buses, and visitors traveling into Aiken. The City no longer advertises to group markets and seeks to only attract visitors who travel to Aiken by car. The restrictions have resulted in the City trolley becoming the "only game in town" for tours of the historic and horse districts. Other mechanisms for touring, such as horse-drawn carriages have not developed since the bus restrictions were enacted, mostly because the ordinance was too stringent.

*Sources: City of Aiken: City Code of Ordinances, Tourism Ordinance; City of Aiken, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism. Phone Interview with Barbara Gassman.*

## **Arlington County**

Arlington accommodates tour bus parking through the designation of specific parking areas managed by its Transportation Engineering Division. Tour bus parking outside of the designated areas or zones is a violation of County law and is enforced by the Police Department. Tour bus parking areas are defined according to the parking duration. Tour buses are not permitted to park at parking meters, except in special situations, in which significant hardship can be proven and requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If a permit is approved for use of metered parking spaces, the County charges an administrative fee and cost recovery for meter revenue. Buses are not permitted to park on the street overnight or for longer than three hours at designated tour bus parking zones. Short-term (2 or 3 hours depending on location) tour bus parking and active loading/unloading is permitted on designated streets. No designated dwell time is specified since it is expected buses will vacate zones after passengers board or alight.

*Source: Arlington Co. website >>*

*<http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/EnvironmentalServices/dot/traffic/parking/EnvironmentalServicesTour.aspx> (April 21, 2008).*

## Atlantic City

The South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA) regulates motorcoach traffic traveling to Atlantic City. Motorcoaches destined to Atlantic City are required to purchase a permit two weeks in advance directly from the SJTA. Upon receipt of a permit motorcoach operators may enter the City and travel to their destination along specified routes. After discharging their passengers, the bus operator must immediately travel to one of the two SJTA designated bus parking facilities. Drivers are not permitted to circulate within the City or stop at any other location after unloading their passengers. To better assist motorcoach operators the SJTA has established a toll free telephone number for the Atlantic City office which is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week. In addition, information regarding SJTA's regulations and illustrative maps of Atlantic City are provided on SJTA's website.



Approved Atlantic City routes. Source: SJTA.

Source: South Jersey Transportation Authority >> <http://www2.sjta.com/sjta/busmanage.asp> (April 21, 2008). South Jersey Transportation Authority, Bus Management Division.

## Baltimore, MD

Baltimore established designated loading zones and long-term parking areas within the City to accommodate motorcoaches. Loading and unloading zones at the Inner Harbor are separated into three geographic areas: West, North/East, and South. At each of these locations the City has established loading zones on specific streets or adjacent to major attractions. Motorcoaches are not permitted to stage/idle except at the South Area zone and for only 10 minutes at this location. Layover parking and overnight parking is available at three locations. Each location requires the payment of a fee which can fluctuate from \$15-45 depending on the location and time of year. The fee is collected by the parking facility and it is unknown if the City recuperates any of these funds. Overnight and multiple day parking are permitted in certain lots. The City is authorized to issue traffic citations with fines up to \$102 to prevent operators from loading, staging, or parking their motorcoaches in unauthorized locations. No information on route restrictions within Baltimore was discovered. The Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association disseminate information regarding motorcoach



Inner Harbor motorcoach parking.  
Source: BACVA.

loading and parking regulations. Information is available on their website.

Sources: Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association. Motor Coach Parking Information. >>

[http://www.baltimore.org/groups\\_tours/gt\\_motor.html](http://www.baltimore.org/groups_tours/gt_motor.html) (April 21, 2008)

## Boston, MA

In an effort to assist tour bus operators traveling within Boston, the City has created a Tour Bus Parking Guidelines map. A product of the Tourism Transportation Task Force, the map displays proper routes of travel, designated loading areas, and the location of layover parking facilities. The City also relies on system of street signage to inform bus operators of regulations that apply within certain areas. The map and flier include information about the types of signs and regulations that have been distributed to tour bus companies and available on-line.

These tour bus maps highlight major highways and arterial roads within downtown Boston as well as the locations of major attractions and hotels. No specific restrictions on routing currently exist, but the map does outline a specific “tour bus route.” Loading zones for passenger drop offs and pick-ups are listed, and a detailed legend specifies the exact location and amount of time operators are permitted to stay within each zone. The maximum time allowed for parking and discharging/picking-up varies from 15 minutes to 3 hours. Buses are prohibited from parking or loading/unloading in metered spaces, commercial zones and at transit bus stops. Finally, Boston restricts buses from idling for longer than five minutes when loading/unloading or parking. A layover parking facility for drivers is also available within Boston outside the City’s historic and urban core.

Sources: City of Boston, Department of Transportation. *Boston Tour Bus Parking website, Boston Tour Bus Drop-Off/Pick-up and Layover Parking Map, and Tour Bus Regulations* >>

[http://www.cityofboston.gov/transportation/tour\\_bus.asp](http://www.cityofboston.gov/transportation/tour_bus.asp). (April 21, 2008). District of Columbia.

District of Columbia Tour Bus Management Initiative Final Report (2004).



Tour Bus Drop-Off, Pick-Up and Layover Parking map, 2008. Source: Boston Transportation Dept.

## Charleston, SC

The City of Charleston's Director of Tourism Vanessa Turner-Maybank addressed the Motorcoach Task Force on August 11, 2008. Ms. Turner-Maybank told the Task Force, Charleston has attempted to strike a balance between the need for tour buses and motorcoaches as a way of bringing people to the City, while preserving the City's sensitive historic and residential surroundings. (Ms. Maybank's presentation, including question-and-answer session, is available in the Task Force meeting minutes from August 11.)

Charleston issues certificates or permits as a mean to control the number of tour buses entering the City's old and historic district. Certificates are only issued to small tour buses, while large buses require a permit. Additionally, to offset the cost of touring by bus the City may impose a fifty-cent fee on individuals participating in a tour on a motorcoach. The City also requires all tours for hire to be conducted by a registered City tour guide. Finally, to manage the traffic flow of tour buses and motorcoaches, Charleston designated specific routes that tour vehicles must use during travel. It is the duty of Charleston's Tourism Management Division to oversee the daily management of tourism related operations within the City.

The City of Charleston Tourism Ordinance (Chapter 29) serves as the guiding policy document for the City's motorcoach management strategies. Key points regarding the ordinance are outlined below:

- Persons acting as a tour guide for hire must be licensed by the City.
- General Regulations:
  - o No vehicle of any kind conducting a tour shall stop or stand at a point of interest. Vehicles must remain as part of normal traffic flow.
  - o Tours in small or large buses are prohibited from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m.
  - o No buses may park with engines idling for more than 5 minutes in residential areas.
- Small Bus: includes vehicles 25 feet or less in length and used for the purpose of touring for hire.
  - o Must be issued a certificate of appropriateness
  - o Generally, small buses may operate on all streets within the historic district (except on cobblestone/brick streets and several designated roads).
  - o *Regularly Scheduled Small Bus Tours*: must submit a schedule of touring to the City, which is used to assign and designate routes that buses must follow.
  - o *Other Scheduled Small Bus Tours*: small buses that do not regularly operate tours must notify the City at least 24 hours in advance of a tour in order to receive an assigned route to follow.
  - o No small bus tour shall take place without a City licensed tour guide (guide card must be displayed in windshield).



Large tour bus routes. Source: City of Charleston.

- Pick up and discharge of passengers must occur only at designated City loading zones.
- Parking of small buses can only occur at designated locations: including the visitor center, designated attractions, and on certain streets.
- No more than 36 small buses can be operated on streets within the City at any one time.
- Large Bus: vehicles longer than 25 feet in length but not longer than 40 feet, used for the purpose of touring.
  - Large buses must acquire a touring permit from the City in order to conduct tours. A separate permit for each trip into districts is required and permits must be displayed in the windshield.
  - Large buses may operate only on a perimeter route and on two arterial roads. Arterial roads, which access downtown can not be used from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 pm.
  - All large buses conducting tours must have a licensed tour guide on board (guide card displayed in windshield).
  - Pick up and discharge of passengers must occur only at designated City passenger loading zones.
  - *Nontouring Purposes*: large buses may enter the district upon issuance of permit which specifies the route and designated loading/unloading point. Buses must depart district after drop off and only enter (along a designated route) to pick up passengers.
  - Parking for large buses is available at a single location.
  - Permit Issuance Restrictions: no more than 6 permits issued per hour between 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.. No more than 4 permits are issued between 12:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 pm.
  - Two perimeter zones specify specific routes for large buses and permits for these routes are issued by the City in an alternating fashion.

*Source: City of Charleston website >> <http://www.charlestoncity.info/dept/content.aspx?nid=86> (April 21, 2008) Phone interview with City of Charleston staff Mary-Margaret Baker and Vanessa Turner-Maybank on May 26, 2008.*

### **Kennebunkport, ME**

In an effort to provide for passage on roads and reduce traffic congestion, the Town of Kennebunkport enacted an ordinance to regulate the operation of motorcoaches. The town considers a motorcoach a vehicle designed to carry more than 15 persons. Motorcoaches are permitted to discharge and pickup passengers only at authorized locations within the town for a maximum period of 10 minutes. During these periods buses are prohibited from idling. In addition, buses are excluded from parking, standing, and loading or unloading on select streets. The town uses an advanced notification system for tour buses that require motorcoaches to notify the town three days in advance of any arrival. Also, motorcoach operators issue a permit that is valid for one arrival and one departure. Finally, the number of motorcoaches permitted within the town is limited to 10 at any given time between the hours of 9:00 a.m.- 7:00 p.m.

*Sources: Town of Kennebunkport. Town Ordinances. Traffic and Parking Control Ordinances (12B) >> [http://www.kennebunkportme.gov/Public\\_Documents/KennebunkportME\\_Ord/traffic](http://www.kennebunkportme.gov/Public_Documents/KennebunkportME_Ord/traffic) (April 21, 2008)*

### **New Orleans, LA**

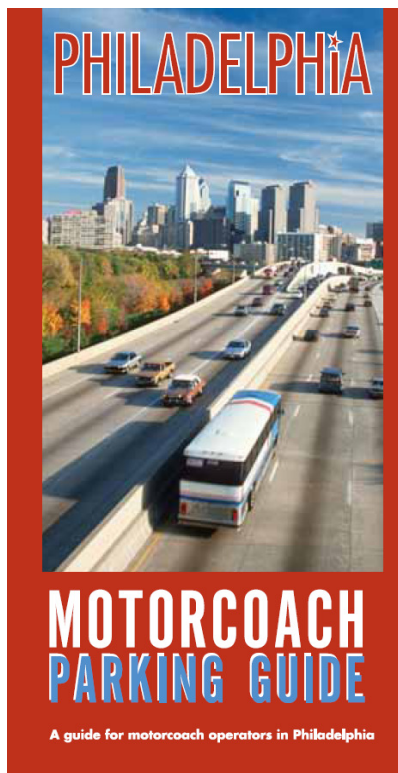
In the City of New Orleans motorcoaches operate for the purpose of conducting tours and must use a driver and tour guide licensed by the City. In addition, the New Orleans Code of Ordinances regulate

the routes motorcoaches can travel and areas buses are permitted to enter. The Code outlines three areas where limitations on travel exist: the Garden District, Vieux Carre, and East New Orleans.

1. Garden District: The City restricts motorcoaches from entering the Garden District if their capacity is over 20 passenger seats. Coaches receiving or discharging passengers traveling to the Garden District can only do so in authorized zones. Similar parking zones for buses waiting to receive passengers have been established in specific areas. Buses with a capacity over 20 passenger seats are restricted from parking in the Garden District and an idling restriction of 10 minutes is in place for all motorcoaches.
2. Vieux Carre: Motorcoaches that exceed 31 feet in length are prohibited from entering Vieux Carre and buses with lengths greater than 20 feet but less than 31 feet are only permitted on certain routes within the area. The City established a perimeter route around Vieux Carre that all buses can traverse, but it is unclear if authorized loading or parking zones have been established on this route. Finally, idling restrictions of 10 minutes, with no standing restrictions of 15 minutes are currently in place.
3. East New Orleans: The City does not permit touring by bus of any kind in east of the Industrial Canal Zone.

**Sources:** *City of New Orleans Code of Ordinances. Accessed via Municode.com from <http://www.cityofno.com/pg-1-42-municipal-code-of-ordinances.aspx> (May 14, 2008)*

## Philadelphia, PA



Philadelphia implemented new motorcoach parking regulations in 2004 in an effort to improve traffic and parking within the central city and historic district. Currently, the city prohibits motorcoaches from parking on city streets and from loading/unloading passengers outside of designated areas within Philadelphia's historic district. These new regulations were put in place after the city opened the Callowhill Bus Center (CBC).

The CBC provides 43 secured spaces for daily and overnight motorcoach parking. The CBC has bathroom, shower and lounge facilities for motorcoach operators at a daily cost of \$20 per motorcoach and \$30 for overnight parking. In addition to providing parking facilities, the city has also designated certain areas as bus loading/unloading zones. The Independence Transportation Center (ITC) located adjacent to the Independence National Historic Park has 11 spaces for passenger pick up and discharge. There are also 10 loading/unloading zones located throughout the city near major attractions.

To better guide motorcoach operators the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau has produced a pamphlet and map outlining the above mentioned information.

**Philadelphia Motorcoach  
Parking Guide. Source:  
Philadelphia Convention and  
Visitors Bureau.**

Sources: *Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau* >>

<http://www.philadelphiausa.travel/philadelphia-page.php?tid=517&pageid=30> (April 21, 2008).

*Philadelphia Motorcoach Travel Guide.*

## **Savannah, GA**

The City of Savannah has enacted a comprehensive Tour Service Ordinance to manage the daily operations of the tourism industry. The strategy is similar to the one used in Charleston, SC and aims to prevent large buses from entering the historic core. To enforce this code the City requires that all motorcoaches over 34 feet in length have a daily permit for operation within the historic district. The permit is issued by the City and includes information on the date, destination, purpose of the trip, and must be publicly displayed. The City issues three types of permits: (1) Transportation Permit, required for traveling in the historic district; (2) Touring Permit, required for touring purposes and (3) Combination Permit, required for one day of touring and seventy-two hours of transportation. The City also requires tours of the historic district be conducted by registered tour guides only.

The City established restricted areas that are off limits to motorcoaches with a length greater than 34 feet. In addition, the City has designated certain areas as loading/unloading zones for passengers. Bus operators are only permitted to remain in the loading zone for 10 minutes when discharging passengers and 15 minutes when picking up passengers. Once passengers have been discharged, motorcoaches must relocate to designated parking/holding zones at the periphery of the historic district. The City does not permit engine idling in the historic district, although unlimited idling zones do exist in certain parking/holding areas. To aid bus operators the City produced a map illustrating the information above.

Sources: *City of Savannah, Savannah Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. Tour Ordinance*

*Guidelines* >> [http://www.savannahvisit.com/groups\\_tourservices.asp](http://www.savannahvisit.com/groups_tourservices.asp) (April 21, 2008). *District of Columbia. District of Columbia Tour Bus Management Initiative Final Report* (2004).

## **Washington, DC**

The District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) is one of several primary points of contact for motorcoach events routes and provides a motorcoach guide to the City on its website. Effective August 1, 2007, the District of Columbia enacted a law that requires a bus from any US state or Canadian province used for travel of a chartered party with a seating capacity of greater than fifteen (15) passengers, to register and/or obtain a trip permit for travel in DC. The permit system has been upheld once by the courts.

The City police department enforces permits and any vehicle owner that uses a trip permit for a vehicle other than the one listed on the front of the trip permit is subject to a fine of not more than \$500 or 180 days imprisonment or both. Permits are non-transferable and vehicles that do not have trip permits may be assessed a \$500 fine. DDOT also promotes idling limits of three minutes except when the outside temperature is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit (buses must have their motors off when parked or may be fined \$500. A standing vehicle that is not loading or unloading passengers is considered to be "parked" regardless of whether the engine is on and the fine for violation is \$250).

The District does not allow tour bus parking or standing on some streets and information regarding street closings can be obtained from the DC Government web site at

[http://dc.gov/closures/closures\\_by\\_type.asp?type=4](http://dc.gov/closures/closures_by_type.asp?type=4) or by phone from the Office of Emergency

Preparedness at (202) 727-3159. Finally, all motorcoaches providing city tours must have a licensed DC Guide on board at all times.

Many of the DC management initiatives emerged from an October 2003 report prepared for DDOT, National Capital Planning Commission, Washington Convention & Tourism Corp and other groups. The objective of the initiative was to develop a plan to ameliorate tour bus problems related to noise, traffic, safety risks, parking, etc. The Final Report is the result of a study performed by Volpe for the initiative. The study was based on three major sources of information: A review of best practices in North American and European cities; interviews with tour bus operators and stakeholders and field observation of tour bus operations. The primary conclusion of this study focused on parking and principally that DC needed to find parking outside the downtown area (peripheral parking), provide structured parking facilities downtown and on-street or off-street surface parking located close to major points of interest. The study also considered distribution strategies with two studied: (a) Distribution by tour bus (i.e. door-to-door); (b) Distribution by Alternative Mode (i.e. Circulator systems). The study recommended developing a Tour Bus Management Plan. (DC currently has a "Motorcoach Guide to Washington" which is posted on-line and includes designated routes, parking locations, registration/permit requirement, National Park Service information and restrictions, radio stations and general information).

Motorcoach carriers coming to the 2009 Presidential Inauguration were mandated to follow specific guidelines before coming to the District for the swearing in, parade and other inaugural activities.

*Sources: District of Columbia, DDOT Motorcoach Guide to Washington >>*

*<http://www.ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view,a,1250,q,639306.asp>. District of Columbia. District of Columbia Tour Bus Management Initiative Final Report (2004). The Inauguration 2009 website provided updated information about bus trips >> <http://www.inauguration.dc.gov/bus.asp> (accessed December 14, 2008).*

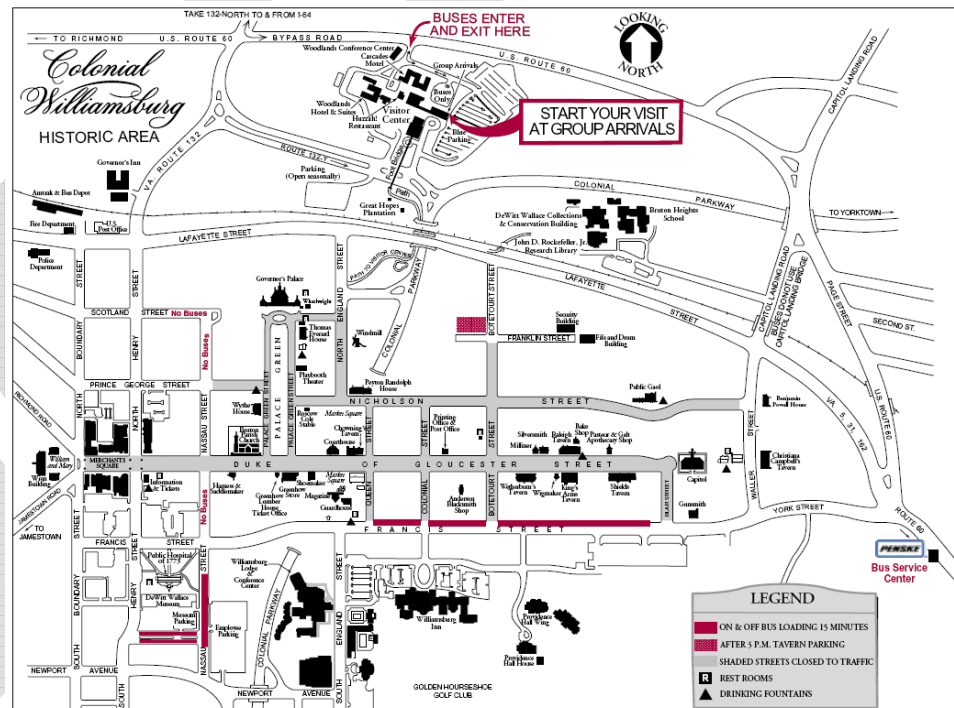
## Williamsburg, VA

Williamsburg Police Chief Mike Yost addressed the Task Force on June 23, 2008 and made several key points:

- Williamsburg is different from Alexandria in that there is comparatively little residential housing near the historic area and Colonial Williamsburg
- The City learned that it could communicate effectively with motorcoach operators but not necessarily drivers
- Two distinct types of buses visit Williamsburg. The first are buses that schedule trips to Colonial Williamsburg (CW). These buses, which may number in excess of 500 per day during the summer, are managed by CW and pose few issues for the City. The second set of buses that visit Williamsburg are not scheduled through CW. The City has not performed counts of these buses and does not have any hard estimates of visitation. However, the City seeks to encourage these buses to use the Penske site and abide by rules posted on the City website.
- Williamsburg has developed and is currently improving its wayfinding sign program
- The city has posted “No Thru Bus” signs at three neighborhoods adjacent to Colonial Williamsburg

The core historic area, Colonial Williamsburg, contains several historic streets, structures and attractions. Certain streets within the historic area are completely closed to motor vehicle traffic of any kind. A visitor center, located on the north side of the historic area, serves as the main staging area for group visits. The city has implemented certain policies to manage tour buses and motor coaches. The city code of ordinances governs mainly the

operation – standing, parking, use of certain streets – of motor coaches. Within the historic area certain streets prohibit through bus traffic and the city has also designated certain streets for loading/unloading passengers. The city requests, but does not mandate, that bus operators do not idle their engines any longer than what is absolutely necessary. A 15 minute time limitation is in place for picking up and discharging passengers within the designated loading zones and buses/coaches are prohibited from parking in those areas. Long-term parking is available at the visitor center, while overnight parking is available at motels in the surrounding area.



**Williamsburg Motorcoach Parking/Routes Map. Source: City of Williamsburg.**

In 2006, to further manage and accommodate tour buses and coaches traveling to Colonial Williamsburg a tour bus center was built. The center, funded by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and operated by Penske, provides long-term and overnight parking, driver's lounge facilities, and a service center. The Penske Center is open seven days a week from 7:00AM-11:00PM on weekdays and 7:00AM-3:30PM on weekends. Currently the center is not experiencing the level of use the city had hoped for and this is mainly the result of a poor signage and the center's location away from the visitor center and main attractions.

The Williamsburg Police Department is the lead agency in charge of disseminating information regarding tour bus operations within Colonial Williamsburg and the enforcement of tour bus regulations. The Department's website contains information on the regulations currently in place and a link to information on the Penske Center. Additionally, a map of the historic area which indicates street closures, loading zones and parking facilities is available online. According to the police department, enforcement of current motor coach rules and regulations consists mainly of informing bus operators of any violations they commit and then directing them to proper parking or loading locations.

**Sources:** *City of Williamsburg, Police Department. Phone interview with Jay Sexton and police Chief Mike Yost (May 27, 2008). City of Williamsburg, Police Department website >>*  
<http://www.williamsburgva.gov/Index.aspx?page=455> (May 27, 2008)

### III. Motorcoach Transportation

In the course of its work, the Motorcoach Task Force sought to incorporate input from the motorcoach industry and local businesses that rely on the use of motorcoaches either for transportation or access to destinations in Old Town. The Task Force heard from the two primary industry associations, United Motorcoach Association and the American Bus Association, and from a major carrier, World Strides. The Task Force also scheduled a trip aboard a New World Tours motorcoach and provided time for Alexandria-based touring companies to address the group regarding the use of sightseeing buses with step-on guides. This section includes a brief review of industry input and a summary of primary findings by the Task Force.



#### About the United Motorcoach Association

The United Motorcoach Association (UMA) was founded in 1971 as the United Bus Owners of America and its membership now includes over 900 motorcoach companies. Another 215 motorcoach manufacturers, suppliers and related businesses are currently “associate” members. The purpose of this Association is to protect and promote the interests and welfare of privately owned common carriers of passengers by motorcoach. UMA’s offices are located at 113 S. West Street in Alexandria. The UMA was represented at Motorcoach Task Force meetings by its president, Victor Parra, and vice-president, Ken Presley.

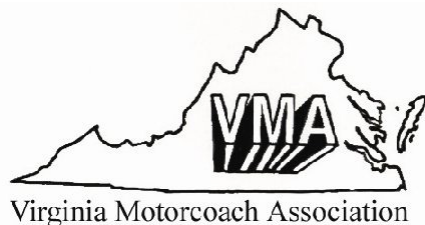
#### About the American Bus Association

The American Bus Association is a motorcoach, tour and travel association that represents more than 65 percent of all private buses on the highways, as well as private travel related businesses, state and local government travel and tourism offices, state associations and other entities involved in promoting travel throughout North America. The ABA was represented at Motorcoach Task Force meetings by its president and chief executive officer, Peter J. Pantuso.



#### Major Tour Operators

A number of major tour operators stop or pass through Alexandria including Martz/Gray Lines, World Strides, New Century Tours, New World Tours and others. Although it is not possible to provide traffic counts or data on all these companies, one tour company did provide the Task Force with measurable data. World Strides, which says it is the largest student travel company in the world, provides trips for between 500,000 and 600,000 students per year. The company provided the following figures for Alexandria: Between April 1 and July 1, 2008, the company booked over 7,000 hotel rooms in the City, brought 1,124 buses into the City (approximately 12 per day) and fed 53,396 people.



### Alexandria Touring Companies

At least four and possibly other Alexandria-based touring companies provide motorcoach sightseeing and walking tours in Old Town. These companies include Alexandria Footsteps to the Past, Alexandria Colonial Tours, Alexandria Tours and Old Town Experience. In a letter to the Task Force dated September 30 and during a subsequent follow-up presentation on November 10, Ms. Betty Ward of Alexandria Footsteps to the Past reported that more than 4,000 people scheduled tours with the company between July 1 and September 29, 2008. The company also reported a figure of between \$2,000 and \$3,000 in benefits to the City due to each sightseeing motorcoach.

Although it was not possible for the City to verify these figures or track direct expenditures by motorcoach passengers, city staff did seek additional information from the Business License Office in the Department of Finance about the direct economic benefit to the City of sightseeing companies. Information including aggregate gross receipts and aggregate amount of taxes paid for tax years 2004-08 is available although the Task Force agreed not to seek this data because of its sensitive nature.

### **Key Issues addressed by the Industry Representatives and Local Business**

Each industry and/or association representative was provided time during a regular Task Force meeting to present issues and answer questions from Task Force representatives. Although the range of issues covered was extensive, the questions centered on three general categories: (a) Size, Emissions and Bus Impacts, (b) Designated Routes & Parking and (c) Bus Benefits.

### Size, Emissions and Bus Impacts

Each of the industry representatives reiterated that motorcoaches are limited by federal law at 45-feet in length, 8.5 feet in width and 13-feet, 2-inches in height. Buses are typically less than 50,000 pounds (60% lighter than a tractor trailer).

The industry generally supports efforts to reduce unnecessary, long-duration diesel engine idling. However, there is quite a bit of misinformation on the topic. There are discrepancies in the Code of Virginia and Alexandria City Code regarding idling. According to the Code of Virginia (§46.2-1224.1), cities may establish a 15-minute limit on idling for buses that are parked, left unattended or stopped for any reason other than traffic, maintenance of loading or unloading a disabled passenger.

The Alexandria City Code (Sec. 9-12-164) sections regarding sight-seeing buses stipulates that drivers of “a parked bus shall turn off the vehicle’s motor for the period the vehicle is parked in the designated space.” Virginia Administrative Code 9 VAC5-40-5670 and Title 11, Chapter 1 of the City of Alexandria Code prohibit tour bus idling for more than 10 minutes in commercial and residential areas.

### Designated Routes & Parking

Most industry representatives encouraged the City to strike a balance that addressed designated routes and parking. Association representatives and touring companies each expressed concern that use of a jitney service would be difficult to implement and that if some type of parking area or central transfer point were implemented, it would require facilities for drivers. Because touring companies typically plan routes, the representatives were optimistic that a system of designated routes could be communicated to drivers. Together, the UMA and ABA represent over three-quarters of the approximately 3,000 registered motorcoach operators and those who do not belong to either association are often one- and two-bus operators. The Associations do not provide guidance on specific routes in localities but do provide communications assistance through their industry

newsletters and electronic messages.

Industry representatives and touring companies were strongly supportive of directional signage, which is considered vital for route-finding purposes even though many buses use GPS for navigational purposes.

### Bus Benefits

Industry representatives repeatedly stressed that motorcoaches are widely regarded as a clean and environmentally-friendly form of mass transportation. Indeed, according to recent reports in The Washington Post and a study by the Union of Concerned Scientists “the mode of transport with the smallest carbon footprint is the motorcoach.”<sup>1</sup> The 50-page report, “Getting There Greener: The Guide to Your Lower Carbon Vacation,” is available at the group’s website ([www.ucsusa.org](http://www.ucsusa.org)).

Estimates vary widely of the economic benefits of motorcoaches, but industry representatives sought to dispel the perception that buses provide only “\$50 hotel room and fast food” visitors. The ABA reported that the motorcoach industry continues to see growth beyond students and seniors with a noticeable uptick in high-end baby-boomer customers.

Industry representatives were ambivalent about the prospect of additional fees or permitting but strongly committed to working collaboratively with the Task Force. There was concern that burdensome permitting fees or processes would drive business away from Alexandria.

### Task Force Motorcoach Field Trip

On September 22, the Task Force boarded a New World Tours motorcoach for field trip to review potential motorcoach routes, unloading/loading areas and short-term parking. The group also sought to identify constraints presented by motorcoach transportation.

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<sup>1</sup> “How Green Was My Vacay,” Coming and Going, The Washington Post, December 14, 2008.

## IV. Primary Issues & Recommendations

In the course of its study, the Motorcoach Task Force sought input from residents, business and industry representatives to identify the primary issues related to motorcoach management in Alexandria. Input directly from the Old Town Civic Association (OTCA), Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association and Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, among others, greatly assisted the Task Force in its development of a framework to properly address motorcoach issues. In particular, a “Statement of Constraints” adopted by the OTCA Board of Directors on October 30, 2008 and a list of concerns communicated by OTCA membership at its regular meeting on October 8, 2008 were immeasurably helpful.

Over the summer, the Task Force heard alternately from industry representatives and cities such as Charleston, SC and Williamsburg, VA as it considered the opportunities and constraints of presented by motorcoach transportation. However, by late July that Task Force determined that it had sufficient background to begin formulating a list of primary issues that would provide a framework for future motorcoach management. The Task Force used a nominal group process to collaboratively and methodically develop a collection of problem statements that were categorized generally under issues such as “parking” or “designated routes.”

The nominal group process was designed to allow an opportunity for Task Force members to communicate individual concerns through small groups and, ultimately, vet them through the entire 15-person Task Force. In the initial list phase of issue formulation, the Task Force followed a round-robin process to record each issue on oversized memo sheets. The list was large: Some 38 different topics for consideration. By subsequently clarifying each idea and “voting” using colored dots, the Task Force members were able to group the issues into subsets deemed to be of greatest importance and those that offered the greatest opportunity for action.

The list below is presented in order of priority and each issue/category included a recommendation about whether it should be addressed using short-term and/or long-term solutions.

- 1. Lack of designated routes puts coaches on sensitive streets/safety (short-term)**
- 2. Lack of short term & overnight parking (short-term and long-term)**
- 3. Enforcement (short-term and long-term)**
- 4. Loading and unloading (short-term)**
- 5. Communication/Education (short-term)**

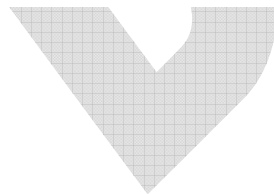
Staff formulated a sample (or “blank”) Motorcoach Task Force Issues Matrix to provide a working structure for the group’s remaining meetings and allow the group to focus its concerns on certain key areas. A completed matrix is provided on the following pages. The remainder of this section is devoted to specific discussion of each primary issue area and the subsequent recommendations.

- 1 -  
**MOTORCOACH TASK FORCE ISSUES MATRIX**

GENERAL CATEGORY	ISSUE	CURRENT SITUATION/CHANGES SINCE 2005	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM	FEASIBILITY (High, Medium, Low)	IMPACTS ON:					
						Bus Operators	Citizens	Business	Visitors	Environment	Public Parking Supply
Parking	Explore whether to designate <u>new short-term parking</u> within and/or peripheral to Old Town.	4-5 short-term parking spaces exist at Robinson Terminal on Union Street. <b>**No changes since 2005.</b>	X		Medium, though unlikely in Old Town. Peripheral locations must be functional	Positive. Short-term parking spaces are needed.	Unclear. Would depend on location.	Unclear. Would depend on location.	Unclear. Would depend on location.	Unclear. Increased emissions may be offset by shifting of impact away from Old Town.	Unclear. Would depend on location.
Parking	Explore establishment of <u>additional long-term/overnight parking</u> peripheral to Old Town.	Long-term parking for multiple buses exists at the Masonic Memorial. <b>**New since 2005.</b>	X		Medium. Questionable benefits without driver amenities. Locations exist but \$\$.	Positive, particularly if driver amenities are included.	Positive, as long as impacts are shifted from Old Town.	Positive if additional long-term parking increases visitation to City.	Positive if service is improved.	Unclear. Possibly reduced emissions but concentration near site and along routes. Some shifting of impacts.	Unclear. Would depend on site.
Parking/ Drop-Off	<u>Assess operation of existing loading and unloading areas.</u> Options include reducing #, increasing # or dispersing parking to other areas in Old Town.	Six designated areas in Old Town comprising 10+ spaces. The areas are: - Waterfront/Unit Block of King Street/The Strand - Market Square - Gadsby's Tavern - Christ Church - The Lyceum - Friendship Firehouse <b>**Changes to Unit Block of King in 2008.</b>	X		High. Necessary to address site-specific traffic congestion. Few options exist in Old Town east of Washington Street.	An increase would be positive to reduce queue time and need to circle in search of drop-off locations.	Unclear. Additional loading/drop-off may increase bus traffic but could prevent unauthorized drop-off and congestion.	Unclear. Added visitors is positive, however additional drop-off may negatively impact parking.	Positive in that faster, improved service would reduce time in bus. A reduction or dispersal may be negative.	Reducing the number of drop-off areas may adversely affect environment by increasing emissions due to queuing, frequent vehicle starts/stops.	Increasing or dispersing the # of drop-off areas could negatively affect parking. Reducing drop-off areas would add more spots into the existing parking supply.
Parking	Study feasibility and alternatives for locating a <u>designated parking/visitor facility</u> in the City.	No such facility currently exists. The 2005 Task Force called for a similar study but none was implemented. <b>**No changes since 2005.</b>		X	Medium. Locations exist but may prove costly to accommodate projected use.	Strongly positive if driver amenities are included.	Positive if impacts to Old Town are minimized through development of alternate distribution strategies.	Positive if bus accommodations are provided.	Positive for those who plan longer stays; negative for drive-through visitors.	Neutral positive. Infrastructure and emissions reduced in Old Town but concentrated near facility.	Neutral positive. Public parking supply could be expected to expand.
Designated Routes/ Directional Signage	Explore whether to <u>post wayfinding signage</u> directing motorcoaches to: - Loading & unloading areas - Short-term parking - Long-term parking	A variety of wayfinding signs are currently in place. There are no wayfinding signs specific to motorcoaches. The City's existing Wayfinding Initiative is developing comprehensive signage system to include vehicular and potentially motorcoach signs. <b>**No changes since 2005.</b>	X	X	Medium. Signage needed but may negatively impact certain streets, particularly if these streets are already congested.	Positive in that it provides clear directions; restrictions may be negative.	Unclear. Primary impact would be borne by citizens on wayfinding routes.	Neutral positive; better signage may improve visitation near designated areas.	Positive by reducing time spent in buses.	Neutral. May reduce emissions but could negatively impact infrastructure on designated routes.	Neutral; would depend on whether parking or drop-off areas are impacted.
Comm & Management	Consider whether to fund and implement a <u>motorcoach counting plan</u> to improve the current data on motorcoach use in Alexandria.	Counts on motorcoach use in Alexandria are available from select carriers and destinations. However, the City has not performed specific counts. <b>**No changes since 2005.</b>	X		High. T&ES staff estimates \$10,000 for study depending on deliverables.	Neutral.	Positive, provides accurate figures with respect to visitation.	Positive, provides accurate figures with respect to visitation.	Neutral.	Neutral.	Neutral.

### MOTORCOACH TASK FORCE ISSUES MATRIX

GENERAL CATEGORY	ISSUE	CURRENT SITUATION/CHANGES SINCE 2005	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM	FEASIBILITY	IMPACTS ON:					
						Bus Operators	Citizens	Business	Visitors	Environment	Public Parking Supply
Comm & Management	Explore whether the City should <u>implement a communications plan</u> for motorcoach touring.	Currently, Industry outreach is primarily conducted by the ACVA. A link for motorcoach information on the City website is re-directed to the ACVA site, which includes text and maps files in PDF. **Changes since 2005 include ACVA brochure and website.	X		High. City communications team is involved. Some technical challenges exist and expenses are undetermined.	Positive, added information (signs, website, telephone helpline) is helpful.	Neutral positive, so long as impact on residents is less.	Positive.	Positive.	Neutral, though added visitation may impact infrastructure and cause added emissions.	Neutral.
Comm & Management	Consider the creation of a <u>tourism management division</u> to serve as a liaison between the tourism industry and the city's residents	No such division or department currently exists within City government. ** No changes since 2005.		X	Unclear. Input from City Manager's office and Council needed.	Neutral positive in that a centralized location for information would be beneficial.	Neutral positive so long as interests are represented by division.	Neutral positive so long as interests are represented by division.	Positive so long as such a division improves visitor's stay.	Neutral.	Neutral positive, as long as coordination with existing agencies is maintained.
Enforcement	Consider <u>increased Police presence and enforcement of existing city ordinances and traffic laws</u> pertaining to motorcoaches.	APD (King Street Detail) provides weekend traffic detail on unit block of King Street. APD steps up enforcement seasonally. **Unit Block detail new 2008.	X		High. APD has worked closely with Task Force and is committed to continued support.	Neutral in that operators will need time to adjust.	Positive in that added enforcement may address repeated concerns.	Neutral, so long as visitation is not negatively impacted.	Neutral.	Neutral.	Positive.
Regulation/ Code	Explore whether to pursue authority to enact a <u>comprehensive tourism ordinance</u> to help manage daily tourism operations within the City.	The City's current ordinances and regulations regarding motorcoach and sight-seeing buses are in Title 9, Chapter 12, Article B, Division 2 of the City Code. These cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment/withdrawal of rights for designated parking spaces</li> <li>- Use of locations other than those designated</li> <li>- Penalties</li> </ul> ** No changes have been made since 2005.		X	Medium. Task Force must come to consensus on many issues.	Neutral, if clear ordinances will greatly clarify operations; new regulations may be highly negative.	Neutral positive, new regulations will likely provide more regulatory authority to City.	Neutral, if clear ordinances will greatly clarify operations; new regulations may also negatively impact tourism.	Neutral, visitor experience must be maintained.	Neutral positive. Regulations would seek to balance environmental impact with business interests' needs.	Neutral, depending on the outline of such an ordinance.



## **ISSUE #1: Lack of designated routes puts coaches on sensitive streets/safety (short-term)**

The question of “designated routes” proved the most difficult for the group to define, debate, and ultimately reach consensus on.

This became apparent during several group exercises using oversized city road maps and Geographic Information System technology that provided real-time access to the City’s extensive database of information regarding streets. Despite having this information and using it several times to focus on reasonable alternatives, the Task Force needed assurance that the issue of designated routes was not solely a short-term solution – i.e. that the City would merely erect signs designating routes without managing the traffic or limiting the number of trips on each street.

Before reaching consensus on the issue of routes, the Task Force determined that designation of motorcoach “routes” should not unfairly concentrate bus traffic on certain streets. It also required the issue of routes to be packaged with other significant policy changes – particularly limitations on certain types of motorcoach trips and a fee-based, registration system. Once these issues fell into place, the Task Force was able to move forward.

The criteria used by the Task Force for consideration of motorcoach routes included the following:

- Functional Classification (the class of roads that the road belongs to – most typically arterial, collector, or local)
- Adjacent Land Use (8 different land uses including residential, commercial, industrial, open space, etc...)
- Street Width (curb-to-curb pavement width, which includes on-street parking)
- Right-of-Way width and Building-to-Building width (width of the city’s right-of-way and distance between buildings on the street, which provides some sense of enclosure)
- Turning Radius (how “tight” are the turns for motorcoaches)
- Presence of Parking or Blind Spots
- Presence of Turning Restrictions
- Presence of “One-Way” designation
- Presence of Landmarks/Attractions (whether the road provides direct access to primary attractions)
- “Walksheds” & Activity Centers (whether the road provided access to numerous attractions within a reasonable walking distance)
- Existing Transit Route (a street currently used by the King Street Trolley, DASH, or MetroBus)
- Access to Commercial Interests & Existing Parking (whether the street provides direct access)

The Task Force also used its September 22 field trip aboard a motorcoach to identify other potential issues of concern. A chart summarizing the results for all the streets in Old Town considered by the Task Force is on the following page:

## MOTORCOACH ROUTE SUMMARY – PAGE 1

Street	Functional Classification	Right-of-Way Width	Curb-to-Curb Width	Build-to-Build Width	On-Street Parking	Curb Radius	One Way	Adjacent Land Use	Access to Landmarks	Transit or Trolley	Parking Access	Turn Restrict.	Notes
Washington	Arterial	88' to 100'	50'-70'	88' to 100+'	Yes/Non HOV	15-25'	No	All (Commercial)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	R to Duke difficult No turns at King No L to Pend. 4-6pm
Madison	Primary Collector	66'	36-42'	66' to 132+'	Yes	15-25'	Yes	Comm, Residential	No	Yes	No	No	R to Fairfax difficult
Pendleton	Primary Collector	66'	36'-42'	70'-78'+	Yes	15-25'	No	Comm, Res, Public	No	Yes	No	No	R onto Royal difficult
Royal	Local	66'	36'-40'	66'+	Yes	15-25'	No	Resid., Public, Comm (Prim. Res S/King)	Yes	Yes (S of Pend.)	Yes	No	R to King difficult
Fairfax	Res. Collector	66'	36' to 40'	66'+	Yes	15-25'	No	Comm, Res, Pub (Prim. Res S/King)	Yes	Yes (N of Prince)	No	No	L onto King difficult
Union	Local	50'	28'-34'	50'	Yes	15-25'	No	Res, Park, Comm	Yes	Trolley only	Yes	No	
Strand	Local	30'	22'-28'	33' to ++	Yes	15'-25'	No	Comm, Park	No	Trolley only	Yes	No	
Prince	Local Res. Collector (1 blk)	66'	40'	64'	Yes	15-25'	No	Comm, Res	No	Trolley only	Yes	No	R to Union difficult Cobblestone blk
King	Primary Collector	66'	24'-48'	66'+	Yes	15-25'	No	Comm, Res	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Duke	Arterial (to Rte 1) Res. Collector (E of Rte 1)	66'	36'-40'	66'+	Yes	15-25'	No	Residential, Comm	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Franklin	Arterial Res. Collector (E of Washington)	100'	40'-44'	100'-115'+	Yes	15-25'	Yes	Residential, Comm	No	Yes (W of Royal)	No	No	

## MOTORCOACH ROUTE SUMMARY – PAGE 2

Street	Functional Classification	Right-of-Way Width	Curb-to-Curb Width	Build-to-Build Width	On-Street Parking	Curb Radius	One Way	Adjacent Land Use	Access to Landmarks	Transit or Trolley	Parking Access	Turn Restrict.	Notes
Bashford	Primary Collector	50' to 60'	24'-36'	106'-150'+	Yes	15-25'	No	Residential	No	Yes (Pitt-Wash)	No	Yes	
Second	Local	66'	26'-56'	66'-86'+	Yes	15-25'	No	All (Comm)	No	Yes (1 blk) (Ffx-Royal)	No	Yes	No access s'bound from Pkwy
First	Res Coll (1 blk) Local	66'	20'-40'	65'-85'	Yes	15-25'	No	Comm, Indust	No	No	No	No	Hotel access
Montgomery	Primary Collector	66'	34'-40'	66'-130'	Yes	15-25'	Yes	Comm, Indust, Park	No	Yes (West of Ffx)	No	Yes	No L from Wash.
Wythe	Primary Collector	66'	36'-40'	66'-110'	Yes	15-25'	No	Res, Comm	No	Yes (1 blk) (Ffx-Royal)	No	No	
Oronoco	Residential Collector	66'	36'-40'	69'-100'	Yes	15-25'	No	Public, Resid	Yes	No	No	No	
Princess	Local	66'	36'-40'	69'-80'	Yes	15-25'	No	Resid, Public	No	No	No	No	Cobblestone (1 blk)
Queen	Local	66'	36'-40'	62'-80'	Yes	15-25'	No	Residential	No	No	No	No	
Cameron	Res Coll (1 blk) Local	66'	36'-40'	62'-100'	Yes	15-25'	W of Wash	Resid, Comm	Yes	Yes (1 blk) (Ffx-Royal)	Yes	No	
Wolfe	Local	66'	30'-40'	62'-100'	Yes	15-25'	No	Resid, School	No	No	No	No	
Wilkes	Local	66'	36'-40'	62'-100'	Yes	15-25'	No	Resid, School Comm, Vacant	No	No	No	No	Wilkes St Tunnel
Gibbon	Local	66'	36'-40'	68'-200'	Yes	15-25'	W of Wash	School, Resid Comm	No	Yes (W of Royal)	No	No	
Jefferson	Local	66'	36'-80'	84'-120'	Yes	15-25'	No	Residential	No	Yes (1 blk)	No	No	
Green	Local	66'	36'-56'	106'-160'+	Yes	15-25'	No	Resid, School	No	No	No	No	

While agreeing conceptually that a network of signed routes is required to convey information to motorcoaches, the Task Force did not agree on specific routes based on the final destination of a bus. The Task Force considered whether to designate routes for the spring 2009 peak season, but ultimately decided to leave the final decision to the proposed advisory group. However, the Task Force urges the advisory committee to provide access for motorcoaches in a manner that disperses the impact across the street grid, limits impacts from certain types of trips and includes a voluntary, fee-based registration system which would be codified (with industry cooperation) within three (3) years.

The presence of designated routes is contingent on a well-managed, fee-based registration system designed to accommodate four primary trip types:

1. Hotels: All buses bound for hotels must register. Hotels not on designated routes will be provided a route. Drop-off/pick-up allowed on hotel property or at designated areas.
2. All buses bound for unloading/unloading/parking east of Washington Street. All these buses would register:
  - a) Buses will be dispersed onto one of multiple routes depending on destination and managed by the City
  - b) Initially there would be no limit on the number of buses that could register
  - c) Routes & Unloading/Loading areas will be color coded
  - d) Registration to involve a fee structure that favors local companies
  - e) Hours for entry/exit to Old Town will be established. After XX pm, entry or exit to Old Town only allowed on King Street
  - f) Buses must prominently display registration in window
3. Sightseeing Buses: Buses w/Alexandria-based step-on guides may get an extremely limited number of permits (for example, 4 total bus trips per day) for sightseeing tours
4. Pass-through Buses: Buses that do not register should stay on Washington Street (or Route 1) and utilize additional unloading/loading to be designated during peak season on Washington Street at King Street

The system of designated routes assumes that the City will ultimately assume responsibility for developing a fee structure that does not unfairly impact local touring companies, implements some time restrictions (“No buses allowed in Old Town between 11 pm and 7 am unless for drop-off or pickup at hotels”) and that buses would display a registration sheet in their windows, for easy viewing by the Police.

The system – though centrally coordinated by the City – would be user-friendly for easy registration and access by authorized partners at local hotels, restaurants and destinations.

The system of designated routes relies on three (3) principal north-south routes that are already arterial roadways:

- Washington Street
- Patrick Street (Route 1)
- Henry Street (Route 1)

The City would also designate five (5) primary east-west routes for motorcoaches seeking to access unloading/loading and/or short-term parking east of Washington Street. The primary short-term change here would be a recommendation to make the unit block of King Street one-way westbound permanently. King Street would also serve as a primary egress route for all motorcoaches and the primary after-hours route:

- Madison Street
- Pendleton Street
- King Street
- Duke Street
- Franklin Street

Finally, certain streets east of Washington Street would provide north-south access to unloading/loading and short-term parking:

- The Strand
- Union Street
- Fairfax Street
- Royal Street

**The network of roads – primarily east of Washington Street – is demonstrated in the graphic below:**



## **ISSUE #2: Lack of short term & overnight parking (short-term and long-term)**

To address the issue of short-term parking, the Task Force proposes to designate the south side of Jamieson Avenue between Holland Lane and South West Street as short-term (2- or 3-hour) motorcoach parking between 7 am and 11 pm. The entire section of Jamieson (currently 36 vehicular spaces) would be designated solely for motorcoach parking between March and Jun. However, during off-peak months (July through February) the City could monitor the parking and reintroduce vehicular parking.

This proposal received nearly unanimous support from Task Force members who expressed concern about the lack of existing short-term (2-hour) motorcoach parking. At present, the only short-term parking is for four-to-five buses (250 feet) on the east side of the 500 block of North Union Street beside Robinson Terminal.

The Task Force believes that by introducing new short-term parking, it may reduce the number of motorcoaches trolling through the City looking for a layover location.

## **ISSUE #3: Enforcement (short-term and long-term)**

The Task Force initially proposes to instruct the Alexandria Police Department to more aggressively enforce existing city ordinances with respect to motorcoach traffic (as outlined in Sec. 9-12-160 through Sec. 9-12-165 of the City of Alexandria Code) and collect/report data related to motorcoach violations. Current City of Alexandria Code provides \$100 fines for violations of traffic infractions related to idling (§9-12-164), loading/unloading in spaces that are not designated by the City (§9-12-162) and parking longer than posted (§9-12-164). Beginning in March 2009, the APD plans to increase enforcement of violations associated with sightseeing buses and will make regular reports to the proposed standing committee. In the long-term, increased fines may encourage better compliance by motorcoach operators.

The City's initial program will be voluntary and require cooperation from industry partners. However, the Task Force determined that the City must ultimately amend the Code of Virginia to acquire regulatory authority to restrict operation of non-scheduled buses to specific streets and/or issue permits. Amendments to the state code should be recommended for inclusion in the City's legislative package within 1-3 years. Industry representatives will be included in the development of legislative proposals and are expected to join the City in seeking regulatory authority for motorcoach management.

The Task Force sought input from many sources to institute a collaborative approach to motorcoach management that addresses the operational needs of the industry with measures to limit intrusive effects on Alexandria's neighborhoods, historic resources, the environment, quality of life, traffic and parking. A voluntary system is a desirable first step, but regulatory authority will be necessary for long-term compliance.

Finally, the Task Force proposes that City Council should continue to support funding the Alexandria Police Department in its motorcoach management efforts in the Unit Block of King Street. (two officers on Friday and Saturday nights) The Alexandria Police Department currently provides two officers on Friday and Saturday night to monitor motorcoach traffic and ensure safe, efficient traffic flow.

#### **ISSUE #4: Loading and Unloading (short-term)**

The issue of loading and unloading proved inseparable from that of designated routes. The Task Force determined that all designated routes must provide access to the established loading and unloading areas. Conversely, new unloading/loading areas were undesirable because of the need to designate new routes to those areas. However, the Task Force arrived at one key recommendation: Designating additional 15-minute unloading/loading spaces in the 100 blocks of North and South Washington Street for both northbound and southbound buses during peak season.

The Task Force recognizes that any system of motorcoach management which will encourage voluntary registration for motorcoaches traveling east of Washington Street must also provide improved accommodations for so-called “pass-through” motorcoaches. This motorcoach trip type is common in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and is aimed at coaches making quick “through” trips of Alexandria bound to other destination such as George Washington’s Mount Vernon Estate or the National Mall. It is assumed that many of these coaches may make only a short stop in Alexandria for shopping/refreshments or, worse, no stop at all – choosing instead to make detours through the Old & Historic District.

Task Force members were concerned about the routes used by both sightseeing tours with Alexandria-based step-on guides and “pass-through” buses with no Alexandria guide. Since the sightseeing tours with step-on guides are manageable through a proposed registration system – and thus unloading and loading areas may be controlled – it was believe that the new 15-minute unloading/loading on Washington Street would serve as a spillover location during peak season and an outlet for pass-through motorcoaches.



The Task Force also determined that incremental short-term changes were sorely needed including new and updated signage for bus operators at each existing unloading/loading and short-term parking location. The current signs are outdated and difficult to read. Eventually, signs from the City’s wayfinding may be incorporated into the motorcoach management system

#### **ISSUE #5: Education/Communications (short-term and long-term)**

The Task Force determined that a combination of electronic, print, and broadcast tools – augmented with media relations and other professional services – would improve communications efforts related to motorcoach traffic. Additionally, the Task Force established that the City of Alexandria Office of Communications would be the primary conduit for communications to *residents, City employees, and the media* about City policies regarding operation of motorcoaches. The Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA) will be the primary conduit for communications to *visitors, industry and business*.

The City and ACVA are coordinating short-term communications improvements to be in place by March 2009. Specific will include targeted outreach to the touring industry and drivers, professional redesign and printing of brochures, interactive mapping efforts and motorcoach media placement in independent print and electronic trade media not affiliated with trade associations.

The primary City efforts will include efforts to keep residents informed about new motorcoach-related developments and policies, help City staff to become familiar with and knowledgeable about motorcoach policies and procedures and promote motorcoach-related resources and policies for Alexandria residents. The City's efforts will focus on the City Web Site ([alexandriava.gov](http://alexandriava.gov)) and include Web Boxes, Special Web Features and Video/Audio Podcasts. An electronic message service (eNews) also reaches over 3,000 City residents and may include a specific motorcoach news category.

Articles are planned in early 2009 in FYI *Alexandria* (resident newsletter, circulation 69,000+); *CityNews* (employee newspaper, circulation approximately 3,000) supported by press releases and potentially paid advertising in local newspapers. The City will also utilize the City of Alexandria Cable Channel 70 and Mayor Euille's program to broadcast motorcoach news.

The ACVA plans to enhance its current communication activities and develop a public relations plan to include the following short term and on-going activities:

Enhancement of current print and electronic communication tools:

- [www.visitalexandriava.com](http://www.visitalexandriava.com) – new site launched in November 2008
- Development of *Driver Information Micro Site* to include: Rules & Regulations, enforcement, interactive mapping tool, directions from north and south, where to eat/stay

Educate local and regional businesses to insure effective motorcoach management

- Alexandria constituent groups working with the motorcoach industry for leisure and corporate related groups to include hotels, restaurants, cultural and historic sites, tourist attractions and service providers, etc; regional Destination Management Companies (DMOs) working with our businesses



- Provide information and tools to disseminate to clientele when booking group business: Motorcoach Task Force Guidelines, revised Motorcoach brochure (print and electronic), requested link on business website to [visitalexandriava.com](http://visitalexandriava.com) and required informational verbiage for client contracts and agreements
- Communicate findings and educate constituents through the ACVA Tourism Marketing Forum, hotel sales meetings, personal meetings with appropriate businesses and Old Town Business & Professional Association

Develop media and public relations schedule to reach the following:

- Trade Association media – enhance current ACVA list of media (print and electronic) to reach the tour industry through communications with the primary trade associations to include: United Motorcoach Association: *The Intelligence* (monthly e-newsletter); *Bus & Motorcoach News* (bi-monthly newsletter), email and fax alerts on [UMA.org](http://UMA.org)
- American Bus Association: [Buses.org/Operator](http://Buses.org/Operator) Trip Planning, *ABA In the News*, *ABA Insider*; National Tour Association: [NTAOnline.com](http://NTAOnline.com), *Courier Magazine*, The Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington D.C. and

Attendance at appropriate tour and travel tradeshow to include: American Bus Association 2009 – 2010, United Motorcoach Expo (tentative); partner representation at individual shows.



## **V. Detailed Recommendations**

This section includes an overview of the Task Force recommendations categorized by “Key Issue” followed by a summary table and detailed discussion of each. While the Task Force considered a broad range of possible approaches and solutions, it concluded that the City can make measurable improvements with a targeted and incremental approach to motorcoach management that will grow organically over time. The Task Force addressed the issues of registration/permitting, oversight, designated routes, short-term parking, loading/unloading, enforcement and communications.

### **General Motorcoach Management Recommendations**

13. Appoint an advisory committee to oversee the future management of motorcoach operations within the City.
14. Institute a voluntary, on-line motorcoach registration system by March 2010 to include fees and daily limitations on certain types of motorcoach trips. In the interim, conduct counts of motorcoach traffic in Alexandria.

### **Designated Routes**

15. Designate the unit block of King Street one-way westbound permanently to allow for safer traffic flow and provide better motorcoach management.
16. By March 2010, establish designated routes for four primary trip types: (1) Motorcoaches bound for hotels, (2) Motorcoaches bound for loading/unloading/short-term parking east of Washington Street, (3) Sightseeing buses with step-on guides and (4) Pass-through motorcoaches. Routes will be vetted and approved through the proposed advisory committee.

### **Unloading/Loading and Short-Term Parking**

17. Designate the south side of Jamieson Avenue between Holland Lane and South West Street as short-term motorcoach parking with limited hours and seasonality.
18. Improve signage at existing designated loading/unloading and parking areas.
19. Designate new 15-minute loading/unloading spaces in the 100 blocks of North and South Washington Street from March through June to accommodate seasonal increases in motorcoach traffic.

### **Enforcement**

20. Instruct the Alexandria Police Department to more aggressively enforce existing city ordinances with respect to motorcoach traffic and collect/report data related to motorcoach violations.
21. Within 3 years, include in the City’s legislative package a joint City-industry proposal to amend the Code of Virginia to acquire regulatory authority to restrict operation of non-scheduled buses to specific streets and/or issue permits.
22. Continue funding the Alexandria Police Department in its motorcoach management efforts on the unit block of King Street.

### **Education**

23. Use a combination of electronic, print, and broadcast tools to improve communications efforts related to motorcoach traffic.
24. Publish a new brochure and motorcoach map in 2009.

### DETAILED SUMMARY OF MOTORCOACH TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE	EXISTING REGULATION	TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION
General Motorcoach Management	No existing management structure	1. Appoint an advisory committee to oversee the future management of motorcoach operations within the City
		2. Institute a voluntary, on-line motorcoach registration system by March 2010 to include fees and daily limitations on certain types of motorcoach trips. In the interim, conduct counts of motorcoach traffic in Alexandria
Designated Routes	Unit block of King Street temporarily one-way on Fri/Sat	3. Designate unit block of King Street one-way permanently
	No routes for motorcoaches. Certain streets posted off-limits by gross vehicle weight/size.	4. By March 2010, designate routes for motorcoaches: (1) Bound for hotels; (2) Bound for loading, unloading and short-term parking <u>east of Washington Street</u> , (3) Sightseeing buses with step-on guides and (4) Pass-through motorcoaches.
Parking	Free, two-hour short-term parking for 4-5 buses (250 feet) on the 500 block of N Union Street and fee parking at Masonic Memorial	5. Designate the south side of Jamieson Avenue between Holland Lane and South West Street as short-term (2 hour) motorcoach parking between 7 am and 11 pm seasonally
	All buses staying for 24+ hours required to use long-term parking at the GW Masonic Memorial	No changes proposed to long-term parking.
Unloading/Loading	Loading/unloading is available in six locations on or east of Washington Street	6. Improve signage at existing designated areas
		7. Designate new 15-minute loading/unloading spaces in the 100 blocks of North and South Washington Street from March-June to accommodate seasonal traffic increases
Enforcement	\$100 fines for violations of traffic infractions related to idling (§9-12-164), loading/unloading in spaces not designated by the City (§9-12-162) and parking longer than posted (§9-12-164), in addition to general traffic laws	8. Instruct the APD to more aggressively enforce existing ordinances with respect to motorcoach traffic and collect/report data
		9. Within 3 years, include in the City's legislative package a joint City-industry proposal to amend the Code of Virginia to acquire regulatory authority to restrict operation of non-scheduled buses to specific streets and/or issue permits.
		10. Continue APD weekend management efforts on the unit block of King Street
Education/Communication	Primarily ACVA responsibility	11. City & ACVA partner on combination of electronic, print, and broadcast tools to improve communications efforts related to motorcoach traffic
		12. Publish a new brochure and motorcoach map in 2009

## General Motorcoach Management


### 1. Appoint an advisory committee to oversee the future management of motorcoach operations within the City.

Category	General
What is the problem?	There is no current management structure or system in place to address motorcoach transportation.
What are the current regulations?	None, except existing City code regarding traffic.
What is the Task Force proposal?	The Task Force determined that a standing committee comprised of residents, industry and staff is necessary to address motorcoach management in Alexandria. Such a committee will serve as a liaison between the tourism industry on the local, state and national level and the City's residents. It will eventually have responsibility for issuance of permits, establishment/maintenance of routes and coordination with the Alexandria Police Department, Office of Communications and Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA). The standing committee should have day-to-day staff support from the City. The standing committee will work through 2009 to improve the City's existing traffic counts of inbound/outbound motorcoaches and implement short-term communications initiatives.


**2. Institute a voluntary, on-line motorcoach registration system by March 2010 to include fees and daily limitations on certain types of motorcoach trips. In the interim, conduct counts of motorcoach traffic in Alexandria.**

<b>Category</b>	<b>General</b>
<b>What is the problem?</b>	Motorcoach traffic – through vital to Alexandria’s local economy – at times conflicts with residential neighborhoods and the City’s important historic fabric.
<b>What are the current regulations?</b>	None.
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	<p>A major task of the standing advisory committee will be to design and institute an on-line registration system to be in place by March 2010. The system will be managed by the City and will establish registration fees, provide remote access for authorized customers and allow for printing of permits. This user-friendly system will be intended to greatly enhance the visitor experience for motorcoaches and tour companies while providing the City with much-needed data on motorcoach visitation and travel patterns. The system will ultimately provide recommended routes for motorcoaches and establish limits on certain motorcoach trip types, notably sightseeing buses with step-on guides.</p> <p>Buses will use routes (see #4 below) and register in a way that limits daily traffic on streets. Buses will be expected to prominently display registration on the windows for ease-of-enforcement by Police.</p> <p>In the interim (beginning spring 2009), the City will seek to conduct counts of motorcoach traffic in Alexandria on primary routes and at key unloading, loading &amp; short-term parking areas.</p>


**3. Designate the unit block of King Street one-way westbound permanently to allow for safer traffic flow and provide better motorcoach management.**

Category	Designated Routes
<b>What is the problem?</b>	Traffic – which is often particularly heavy on Friday and Saturday nights – causes several congestion on lower King Street, particularly when motorcoaches are involved
<b>What are the current regulations?</b>	<p>No existing regulations. The APD currently provides two officers on Friday and Saturday night to monitor motorcoach traffic and ensure safe, efficient traffic flow on lower King Street. The unit block of King Street is designated westbound one-way on weekend nights and is currently signed to promote tour bus use.</p> 
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	Designating the unit block of King Street one-way westbound permanently will allow for safer, more effective traffic management, especially given the presence of the King Street Trolley. Under this plan, King Street would serve as a primary egress route for motorcoaches and would serve as the primary after-hours route.

**4. By March 2010, establish designated routes for four primary trip types: (1) Motorcoaches bound for hotels, (2) Motorcoaches bound for loading/unloading/short-term parking east of Washington Street, (3) Sightseeing buses with step-on guides and (4) Pass-through motorcoaches. Routes will be vetted and approved through the proposed advisory committee.**

Category	Designated Routes
<b>What is the problem?</b>	A lack of designated routes for motorcoaches to final destinations in Alexandria causes uncertainty by drivers, tour operators and business and contributes to congestion
<b>What are the current regulations?</b>	<p>No existing regulations. Tour bus route signs exist on Lower King Street at Union Street to direct motorcoaches to unloading/loading on The Strand.</p> 
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	<p>The proposed advisory committee will continue to review and ultimately approve by March 2010 designated routes for four primary trip types: (1) Motorcoaches bound for hotels, (2) Motorcoaches bound for loading/unloading/short-term parking <u>east of Washington Street</u> (3) Sightseeing buses with step-on guides and (4) Pass-through motorcoaches. Routes will be signed, color-coded and easy-to-follow for tour bus operators. Buses will be dispersed onto routes in such a way that limits traffic on streets daily.</p>


**5. Designate the south side of Jamieson Avenue between Holland Lane and South West Street as short-term motorcoach parking with limited hours and seasonality.**

Category	Short-term Parking
<b>What is the problem?</b>	Short-term parking is currently limited to two locations, each of which has disadvantages. Currently, free, two-hour, unreserved short-term motorcoach parking exists for four to five buses (250 feet) on the east side of the 500 block of North Union Street beside Robinson Terminal. Buses may also pay \$10 to park temporarily at the Masonic Memorial. Neither location offers ample amenities for drivers.
<b>What are the current regulations?</b>	City code (§9-12-164) provides a \$100 fine for sightseeing buses that park for longer than the poster period.
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	<p>The Task Force proposes new short-term parking on the south side of Jamieson Avenue between Holland Lane and South West Street.</p>  <p>This parking would be limited in nature (2- to 3-hours) and be restricted to between 7 am and 11 pm. Parking would be primarily for motorcoaches during peak months (March through June) but during off-peak months (July through February) the City could monitor the location and reintroduce vehicular parking as needed.</p>


**6. Improve signage at existing designated loading/unloading and parking areas.**

Category	Unloading/Loading
<b>What is the problem?</b>	Existing signage is faded and in poor condition.
<b>What are the current regulations?</b>	None
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	<p>Improvements in existing signage – primarily using newly screened signs compliant with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Signs – would better communicate existing parking restrictions.</p> <div> </div> <p>Signs should be improved at unloading/loading locations as well as spot across the City that are currently signed “No Bus Loading, Unloading or Idling.”</p>

**7. Designate new 15-minute loading/unloading spaces in the 100 blocks of North and South Washington Street from March through June to accommodate seasonal increases in motorcoach traffic.**

Category	Unloading/Loading
<b>What is the problem?</b>	Many buses make brief “pass-through” trips of Alexandria when en route between DC and Mount Vernon. A number of these buses provide only an extremely brief period of time for tourists to see the City, and some buses do not stop at all.
<b>What are the current regulations?</b>	None
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	<p>The Task Force is seeking to limit the negative impacts of “pass-through” buses without inadvertently harming potential visitors to Alexandria. By designating new unloading and loading spaces in the 100 block of North and South Washington Street, the Task Force hopes to encourage “pass-through” buses to remain on one of the City’s larger arterial streets while also providing an opportunity to drop-off passengers in a location that is convenient to access other modes of transportation, particularly the free King Street Trolley.</p>  <p>The unloading/loading area should be designated for 15-minutes only and should be strictly enforced by Police. It is possible for the City to designate these spaces seasonally – March through June. During off-peak season, the number of spaces may be smaller and/or regular vehicular spaces opened.</p>

**8. Instruct the Alexandria Police Department to more aggressively enforce existing city ordinances with respect to motorcoach traffic and collect/report data related to motorcoach violations.**

Category	Enforcement
<b>What is the problem?</b>	<p>Motorcoach operators commonly allow passengers to unload or load in undesignated locations and allow buses to idle for too long. The current City Code with respect to idling is contradictory with citations (and on-street signs) that say “No Idling” pursuant to Sec. 9-12-164 although Virginia Administrative Code 9 VAC5-40-5670 and Title 11, Chapter 1 of the City of Alexandria Code prohibit tour bus idling for more than 10 minutes in commercial and residential areas. This needs to be corrected and clarified.</p> 
<b>What are the current regulations?</b>	<p>City of Alexandria Code provides \$100 fines for violations of traffic infractions related to idling (§9-12-164), loading/unloading in spaces that are not designated by the City (§9-12-162) and parking longer than posted (§9-12-164).</p>
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	<p>Beginning in March 2009, the APD plans to increase enforcement of violations associated with sightseeing buses and will make regular reports to the proposed standing committee. In the long-term, increased fines may encourage better compliance by motorcoach operators.</p>


**9. Within 3 years, include in the City’s legislative package a joint City-industry proposal to amend the Code of Virginia to acquire regulatory authority to restrict operation of non-scheduled buses to specific streets and/or issue permits.**

Category	Enforcement
<b>What is the problem?</b>	The City of Alexandria does not currently have authority from the Commonwealth of Virginia to regulate nonscheduled buses (motorcoaches). This prevents the City from establishing designated routes and/or requiring buses to purchase a permit to use certain streets.
<b>What are the current regulations?</b>	Existing state code (§46.2-1304) allows local regulation of trucks and buses, but does not specifically provide for restrictions of nonscheduled buses (other than school buses) on designated streets. Currently, the cities of Williamsburg and Poquoson have amended state code to provide those localities with the regulatory authority to do so. Because Virginia is a “Dillon Rule” state, Alexandria must first seek approval from the state legislature before it can amend the state code.
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	The City’s initial program will be voluntary and require cooperation from industry partners. However, the Task Force determined that the City must ultimately amend the Code of Virginia to acquire regulatory authority to restrict operation of non-scheduled buses to specific streets and/or issue permits. Amendments to the state code should be recommended for inclusion in the City’s legislative package within 1-3 years. Industry representatives will be included in the development of legislative proposals and are expected to join the City in seeking regulatory authority for motorcoach management.

**10. Continue funding the Alexandria Police Department in its motorcoach management efforts on the Unit Block of King Street.**

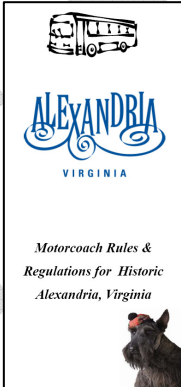
<b>Category</b>	<b>Enforcement</b>
<b>What is the problem?</b>	Coordinating vehicular, pedestrian and motorcoach traffic on lower King Street is challenging on weekends, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights. The intersection of King and Union streets, as well as traffic on The Strand is often gridlocked due to heavy use.
<b>What are the current regulations?</b>	The Alexandria Police Department currently provides two officers on Friday and Saturday night to monitor motorcoach traffic and ensure safe, efficient traffic flow. This arrangement was created, in part, in response to the National Harbor Collaborative
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	The Task Force proposes to maintain this operation for the foreseeable future during peak visitor season (March through June) to maintain safe and efficient traffic flow.

**11. Use a combination of electronic, print, and broadcast tools – augmented with media relations and other professional services – to improve communications efforts related to motorcoach traffic**

Category	Communication/Education
<b>What is the problem?</b>	Rules and regulations relating to motorcoach transportation are unclear to tour operators, bus operators, citizens, business and city staff
<b>What is the current situation?</b>	<p>The City of Alexandria Office of Communications is the primary conduit for communications to <i>residents, City employees, and the media</i> about City policies regarding operation of motorcoaches. The Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association is the primary conduit for communications to <i>visitors, industry and business</i>.</p> 
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	<p>The City and ACVA are coordinating short-term communications improvements to be in place by March 2009. Specific will include targeted outreach to the touring industry and drivers, professional redesign and printing of brochures, interactive mapping efforts and motorcoach media placement in independent print and electronic trade media not affiliated with trade associations. The primary City efforts will include efforts to keep residents informed about new motorcoach-related developments and policies, help City staff to become familiar with and knowledgeable about motorcoach policies and procedures and promote motorcoach-related resources and policies for Alexandria residents. The City's efforts will focus on the City Web Site (<a href="http://alexandriava.gov">alexandriava.gov</a>) and include Web Boxes, Special Web Features and Video/Audio Podcasts. An electronic message service (eNews) also may include a specific motorcoach news category.</p>

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**12. In partnership with ACVA, publish a new brochure and motorcoach map in 2009 based on the recommendations of the Task Force. The map would also designate streets where overweight/oversize vehicles are currently prohibited.**

Category	Communication/Education
<b>What is the problem?</b>	The existing “Rules and Regulations” brochure is difficult to use, includes misinformation and does not have the full support of the City
<b>What is the current situation?</b>	<p>The City and ACVA partner on the existing publication, “Motorcoach Rules &amp; Regulations for Historic Alexandria, Virginia” which is available on-line and at motorcoach unloading and loading areas</p> 
<b>What is the Task Force proposal?</b>	A new brochure with loading/unloading/parking areas, updated rules and regulations, enforcement practices, directions and indications of where to eat and where to stay would provide assistance to motorcoach operators and industry representatives